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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

AT the beginning of this month, the public mind was exalted to a high pitch of sanguine, or rather of sanguinary expectation. Every breeze from the Peninsula was hailed as bearing the glad tidings of a battle, that is, a deathful conflict among a multitude of human creatures. After having spent four or five hundred millions in the present war, and lost, perhaps, not less than four hundred thousand lives, this strange public, in a state of apathy with respect to domestic exigencies, is all alive to advices from abroad; and while lists of the killed and wounded fill the columns of the public papers, amidst the dying moans of husbands and fathers, and the tears of mothers and orphans, the starving manufacturer is prepar-

ing his rush-light for a new illumination.

When not able to fill, or to stain their prints with battles and bloodshed in the large way, it becomes necessary to keep up an interest and agitation of the popular mind, by the most minute and circumstantial detail of horrid and barbarous murders, the consummation of personal criminality. We have doubts, whether it will be really serving the public, thus to shock the eyes, and, as it were, *scar* the hearts of their readers, particularly the younger part of them, with these monstrous representations of human atrocity. It is like taking our children to a slaughter-house. It sprinkles the pure and innocent imagination with blood; it vitiates the natural *taste*

for virtue in all ranks; and hardens the national character. It is true, we have not combats of gladiators, or of bulls, but our stage and our press appears to be arenas hired out for the display and exhibition of human nature in its most revolting aspect. Of one thing, however, we can have no doubts. We allude to the confidence, we will not scruple to call it the presumptuous and impious confidence, which most, if not all of these hardened and ferocious criminals testify, "of having made their peace with their Maker," of "having been accepted by their God," of their assured repentance, (not merely a trembling hope, such as the best of us might indulge,) but we again and again say, a *presumptuous* confidence of acceptance. We hesitate not to call it so, whether it springs up in the mind of itself, or whether, as is much more probable, it be instilled into the prostrate mind, by the ministers of religion. Much as we have to say upon this topic, on *the awful responsibility hereby incurred*, we can only, in this place, slightly touch upon the subject, with a warning, not to suppose, or to make others suppose, that a life of confirmed evil habit can be changed in a few hours, and not to intrude rashly into the counsels or judgment of the Most High.

Never surely was there a country whose true interests lay in the continued cultivation of commercial friendship and correspondence with all the world, more trained than Britain has been to military speculations, to military habits, and to a certain amateur taste for military parade, dress, and manners, as if an imitation in these particulars were all the connexion we were desirous of holding with the continent. In imitation of Frederic of Prussia, (not the great Frederic,) the regiment of the Prince Regent, (the

10th,) is not to have a man in it under five feet, seven inches, and all under that standard are to be discharged. The Prince has devoted much of his time and taste to the study of the new uniform. The whole officers of the German Legion are placed in permanent rank, and thus 1200 officers from Germany are advanced by a single paragraph in the Gazette over the heads of many thousands of English officers, who have not merely worked their way up by hard service, but have paid their money as well as spilt their blood in acquiring their rank. But the constitutional policy of the country, or rather of the government, will not suffer Catholics of Ireland to become general officers, a measure that would incite the Catholic population to a spontaneous enlistment, and a generous devotion of millions to the support of Britain. We will not hesitate to say, that 50,000 men could by the single measure of emancipation, be added to the armies of the empire, and the delay in the last session may have suspended the victories of Lord Wellington, and risked the total loss of the Peninsula.

It is indeed to the desire of carrying on the war with energy, (which appears the prevailing passion of the day, since the late success in Spain,) that the Catholics of Ireland are to look for success in their petition. It is not the justice of their cause, but the circumstances of the times, which will work out their deliverance, and regain the warm affections of the Prince Regent. The victory of Lord Wellington, the capture of Madrid, and the brilliant achievements of the campaign, are, in this respect, means of leading the way of a conciliation of these countries. In other respects, we think, they tend to the indefinite prolongation of a calamity.

tous war. Peace, is mutual victory. Peace, general peace, would be the greatest relief the afflicted world could receive. Humanity demands it. Sound policy no less irresistibly pleads for it. But many are deaf either to the gentle whisperings of humanity, or the louder calls of well-understood self-interest.

Among the Occurrences, will be found a delineation of the distresses of the people of England, not drawn from the speeches of those, who, to avoid the force of their close reasonings, are styled by their opponents factious demagogues, but from the correspondence with the association in London, for relieving the distress of the manufacturers. This association was evidently of aristocratic formation, and is abundantly tinged with sentiments of this complexion. At the head of it stands the Duke of York. Their accounts may be taken as free from exaggeration: It is a melancholy picture, and deserving of more attention, than the warlike paragraphs, and the prostituted offerings of the muses, so common in the news-papers, tending to raise the war-whoop, and urge the nation on to their ruin. A splendid victory, more showy in its detail, than useful in its effects, sets at work a number of poets, or imitators of poets, who, knowing the feverish and diseased state of the public mind, minister to the disorder, and seek for a dishonest reward, by keeping up the popular delusion, as supposing, that by flattering the warlike propensities, they may more easily mount to fame, without solid merit; thus sacrificing the public good, and the truly noble fame of speaking wholesome truths, to the sordid desire of procuring a temporary short-lived reputation. The accounts of actual distress seldom find a place in the public prints;

they are shoved out of the way, by the flattering representations, more calculated to please the vitiated taste of a people delighting in war; and the managers of the press, intent on flattering the prevailing opinion, are little solicitous to give an impartial representation of things as they really are. Yet these accounts, of distress when they are well authenticated, and free from exaggeration, more become our present state, than the most pompous and high-sounding WAR-SONGS! We request our readers to turn their eyes to this delineation of national distress. It was written during the continuance of the fatal Orders in Council. The suspension of them afforded a temporary gleam of comfort to the manufacturer, but it was suddenly withdrawn by the now generally admitted certainty of the American war. If the prospect of a partial pacification gave so much satisfaction, as was evinced in the manufacturing districts of England, what joys, unalloyed with any mixture of human sufferings, and what peaceful triumphs, would the general restoration of friendly relations have afforded? The public mind was elevated by the restoration of the hopes of restored harmony with America. The disappointment of this hope may be speedily looked to, as likely to produce the most depressing reaction on those who were lately so highly elevated, and fondly looked for a revival of trade, in the restoration of the American market for their decaying and languishing manufactures. Such a state of things requires some time to produce the full effects of the crisis, but when the articles so incautiously and rashly forced out to America, in the first moments of tumultuous joy, by men eager without prudent precaution to empty the burdened warehouses, are refused admittance; and when

in their haste for a market, manufacturers, turned into exporting merchants, find their mistake, dreadful effects may be anticipated on the commercial prosperity, and perhaps on the internal peace of the country.

The following lines by Coleridge, who was not a war-poet, written in 1798, are still applicable to our state, and to the insatiable mania for war, which yet so powerfully rages in many bosoms, notwithstanding the fatal occurrences, and the many disappointments to ill-founded hopes, which have occurred in the intervening period of calamitous warfare. Calamitous it may certainly be called, notwithstanding some instances of occasional success. It may be said to be calamitous, when so much has been suffered, so much of national means has been wasted : and yet our condition has not been bettered, or our capabilities to procure a peace augmented.

.....“ Thankless too for peace,
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas),
Secure from actual warfare, we have lov'd,
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war !
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and blood-shed ; animating sports !
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants ! no guess
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt ;
No speculation on contingency,
However dim and vague ; too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause : and forth
(Stuff'd out with big preamble, holy names,
And adjurations of the God in Heaven ,
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands ! Boys
and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal !
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers

From curses ; who knows scarcely words enough

To ask a blessing of his heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical, in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide ;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues,

Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which

We join no feeling, and attach no form,
As if the soldier died without a wound !
As if the fibres of this god-like frame
Were gor'd, without a pang ! as if the wretch,

Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Pass'd off to Heaven, translated, and not kill'd,

As though he had no wife to pine for him.”

The meeting at Manchester for the purpose of promoting the two great benefits of PEACE AND REFORM, as noticed among the Occurrences, are highly deserving of attention. It would be well for the country if these two potent words of ill omen to the speculators, and those who thrive on the miseries of their country, but of the highest acceptation to all who see the best interests of the British isles, were re-echoed from one end of the country to the other, and from shore to shore ! The people spoke on the subject of the Orders in Council, and their voice, however late, and reluctantly, was attended to. The voice of the people, if they are only unanimous and enlightened, is irresistible. Governors of nations, for selfish interests, like to play at the hazardous game of war ; but the nation should reclaim peace, and with united voice, no longer dazzled by the false, but destructive glare of victories, demand the restoration of the blessings attendant on the cessation of the complicated miseries of war.

Peace is most probably attainable on reasonable terms ; perhaps on better terms now than if warfare should be protracted. Britain need

not fear the commercial rivalry of peace. Her facilities for commerce are greater than those of France ; and in proportion to them would be her advantages in a state of peace.

Although we are not prone to praise, and are slow in commending, yet having long viewed the conduct of the Duke of Sussex, it might be unjust to be niggardly in withholding what is due to his merit. He is the liberal friend to education, unshackled by creeds, and the useless appendages with which a jealous establishment would seek to encumber it. With the laboriousness of research, and the discernment of an expanded mind, he advocates the cause of Catholic emancipation, and shows himself capable of pursuing an enlightened policy, and a virtuous independence of judgment, in a situation in which there are necessarily many allurements to draw him aside. When princes act in this manner, they dignify their high situation, and their merit is farther heightened by the contrast, when compared with the too general conduct of those who possess what, absurdly enough to be sure, in the eye of philosophy, is called high birth. To be found pursuing the path of honour amid many examples of a contrary nature, is no small praise.

The revolution in Spanish America is taking so firm root, as to leave little room to doubt that the American colonies of Spain, at least the continental ones, will become independent of the mother country. The mediation of Britain has been refused by the Cortes in Spain, in the negotiation with the revolted colonies, not without the expression of many suspicions as to British sincerity. Britain stands in a delicate predicament. Bound by treaties to the old country, our government must find it difficult to pursue that line

BELFAST MAG. NO. I.

of conduct which policy demands with respect to Spanish America. The United States of North America from motives of commercial interest, as well as from a fellow-feeling arising from a similarity of views and conduct, hold out the hand of fraternity. The United States cannot be indifferent to a struggle, so similar to their own, out of which they came forth victorious. The whole continent of America, independent of Europe, and fully settled with a population equal to the great extent of territory, holds forth a vast subject for contemplation to those who occasionally indulge in anticipations of the future.

War, in an especial manner, has a tendency to unchain the bad passions. The Americans of the United States have received many and great provocations before they declared war.* In the outset, they stain a

* The question, "Are we at war with America?" has now received a positive and definite answer, in the following paragraph in the *National Intelligencer*, the demi-official organ of the American Executive. The grounds of the war are explicitly stated, and are not confined to the operation of the Orders in Council. Neutral rights are expressly claimed on the broad basis of the independence of the sea. The searching of American ships, and the impressment of their seamen, are declared to be the essential grounds of the war. Are the British prepared to give up these claims? If they are not, we may look for a long and calamitous warfare with the United States.

"The Orders in Council of the British Government are now no longer a question with the United States. The question of Peace now requires only a proper and vigorous use of the ample means which the government is possessed of, to render it speedy, decisive, and glorious. A peace, when it comes, must bring with it more than the confession of British outrage, by the retraction of its avowed tyranny; it is not a mere cessation to do wrong, that can now produce a peace. Wrongs done must be redressed, and a guarantee must be given, in the face

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good cause by popular outrages. The conduct of the mob is unjustifiable at Baltimore, where a ferocious attack was made on the Editor of an obnoxious newspaper, and one person killed, and others severely injured. It is a disgrace to a country to permit such proceedings; they are deserving of the strongest reprobation. Yet many judge of actions as they happen to be done by the party to which they belong, or to which they are opposed. Thus the conduct of an American mob, acting against British interests, will be extravagantly censured; and perhaps the most loud declaimers on the subject may be found among the abettors of the disgraceful riots at Birmingham, and of the destruction of the press of the Northern Star at Belfast. Far from us be such casuistry, or that twisting and accommodation of morality to screen a party. It is a crime against liberty to prevent by force a free expression of sentiment, and ought to be unequivocally condemned, let the actors be in whatever rank, or the atrocity committed on whatever side. The actors in the disgraceful scenes at Baltimore justly deserve to be stigmatised by the most severe censure.

The government of the UNITED STATES has, no doubt, prepared for the difficulties and dangers of war, not merely as affecting the interests of individuals, or of particular classes, but as endangering the safety and integrity of the Union. The shipping and mercantile interests which

influence the cities of America, particularly in the northern parts, will be much discontented with the war; nor will the prizes brought in by privateers compensate, in any considerable degree, for the great loss sustained by the commercial portion of the community. Discontent will be instigated into dissatisfaction, and it will require a strong executive power, firmly and extensively enforced, to hold the American states in that consolidated union which peace and general prosperity have, thus far, rendered firm and cemented, by self-interest, as well as the sense of public duty. Neutrality, when changed into hostility, assumes a totally distinct character; but a feeble, intermitting hostility, now progressive, and now suspended, will place every country, however geographically strong, in a state of most precarious dependence on the hazard of fortune, instead of commanding it by long forecast and rapid execution. War is an acute disease that exhausts in the beginning, by the violence of fever; but often on recovery pushes forward the growth, and seems a sort of critical era, that invigorates the public system, as fever in the animal system is followed by more rapid adolescence.

We think that both the English government, and the English people, are apt to act from partial information, with respect to continental affairs, either in Europe or America. In fact, we have of late years lost acquaintance with Europe. The Morning Chronicle, a periodical paper of the first character, has been busily occupied with predictions that Napoleon would never pass the Dwina, when, a few days after, he is found in full march to Moscow; and with respect to America there is a general conviction imprudently encouraged by the whig party, in their

of the world, for the restoration of our enslaved citizens, and the respect due to our flag, which, like the soil we inherit, must in future secure all that sails under it."

"The rights of neutrals must be recognized, and the British, like the first tyrants of the Swiss, must no longer expect a free people to bow down and worship the symbols of British usurpation."

National Intelligencer.

public meetings, that accommodation must shortly be the consequence of Mr. Brougham's specific. Much dependence is also placed on English influence operating, in various ways, through the mercantile discontent; through the medium of the press; and through ways less legitimate, which resemble that mode of warfare adopted by poisoning the springs of the country. It is this mode of warfare which excites, on the other hand, the military mania, the tarring and feathering, and all the licentiousness of the populace; and adds the horrors of civil war to those of a legitimate hostility. The invader of American independence is already within their country, and it is not the naval nor the military power of Britain which they are most to fear. It is only a strong government which can save them. Peace dispenses with it, but war demands it. Their executive is under the most awful responsibility.

Sicily has a revolution, and that also under British protection. So Britain can also act *a-la mode Française*, when it appears to suit their interests. The Feudal system is abolished. So far good. A constitution similar to the British is declared. It is necessary to pause, and let time proclaim the future effects, before praise can judiciously be bestowed. Let us first see, if they are to have the British constitution beautiful in theory, or corrupted in practice. Corsica also had the model of the British constitution forced on them, but its continuance was soon reduced "to the baseless fabric of a vision." Whether the British constitution shall be permanently established in Sicily, or whether Bonaparte shall give "his form and pressure" to Spain and Portugal, remains to be decided by the people of these coun-

tries, but whether apathy or wisdom shall direct that choice, is more doubtful, and is yet to be ascertained by future contingencies.

The inaction of Sweden in the present contest in the North is equivocal. It remains to be seen, whether Bernadotte, as Crown Prince, will take an active part. Our writers of all parties are nearly unanimous in asserting, according to their overweening attachment to British interests, that Sweden ought to act against France. To those so remote from the scene, and so inadequately qualified to judge of the true interests of other countries, doubts might be more becoming. But thorough-paced partisans stop not to inquire, nor do they care about other countries, so the often misunderstood and erroneous interests of Britain be supported. If Sweden should continue neuter, and the Danes remain aloof, with a just recollection of the wrongs they sustained from Britain, by the attack on their capital, it requires more knowledge of local circumstances than falls to the share of most placed at a distance, to determine on the wisdom of their councils.

Napoleon is about to take the Russian Empire *by storm*, while its Emperor is going on an excursion from his own territories to a conference with Bernadotte, at Abo, in Finland. It is perhaps the easiest way to take this large country by a *coup de main* directed against one or other of its capitals, and it is probable, that the plan is to take possession both of Moscow and Petersburg; of Moscow in the first place, and then of Petersburg by the grand division of the French armies, which will proceed by the way of Riga. As soon as Napoleon arrives at Moscow, Riga will be taken by assault, and the approach to Petersburg

will then be open to Macdonald, while Napoleon himself, after the capture of Moscow, will, it is probable, march to the shores of the Baltic, and arrive in time to co-operate with the other grand division in its attack on the naval capital of Russia. Moscow is truly the *metropolis* of Russia, and it is likely, that a revival of all its ancient pre-eminence will captivate many of the great land-holders, as well as the people, and thus seduce them to conspire in the purposes of the French Emperor, who, by restoring Moscow to the dignity of the capital, will accomplish a grand improvement in the whole country. Petersburg will return to its natural and geographical destination, as a naval arsenal, placed at one side of the empire, but Moscow can with ease maintain a communication not only with the Baltic by the Dwina, but with the Black Sea by the Borysthenes, both at no great distance, while she can at the same time speed her intercourse through many regions by the long course of the Wolga. Moscow is in reality the seat of Empire, (the capital of the Moscovites,) from proximity to these great rivers, which is best suited to connect the North of Europe with the Eastern parts; and such are the rapid improvements made by the ingenuity and industry of man, in all that relates to inland navigation, that Moscow will probably, in no long time, be a central station of commerce between the Northern seas, through the Baltic, and the Mediterranean sea, through the Euxine.

It is wonderful how the activity of human industry surmounts the obstacles cast in its way. The circulation of industry throughout the globe, like the circulation in the animal system, will proceed by a number of anastomosing branches,

when a large channel of communication is closed up. When one power exercises an arbitrary dominion over the ocean, the consequence is, and has been, and will continue to be, a more unremitting activity in facilitating the means of internal trade, and interior navigation, which latter is, in itself, one of the principal means of improving and civilizing waste and semi-barbarous countries. Russia, by a full development of its river-communication, can thus be consolidated, approximated in all its parts, made thoroughly acquainted with itself, and an empire hitherto weak by excessive size and dispersed population, of gigantic stature, but without correspondent muscle and sinews, will become vigorous and energetic; the life-blood of liberty will flow through all its members, and humanity will triumph over the spirit of monopoly in the land, if not on the ocean.

We do believe, that the internal trade of Europe has been surprisingly increased by the ill-directed councils of Britain; we say ill-directed, in the contemplation of her own exclusive welfare. The ocean compressed, has, as it were, forced up the rivers, and from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, there are capabilities of interior trade, the best of trades, improved to the highest degree, which will in a great measure supersede the tedious navigation of the ocean to the East and West Indies. Napoleon will make Europe, like France, independent of colonies, and large navies, and of the Eastern or Western world. His policy seems to push forward such a system of *internal communication*, as will place Europe in a state of insular independence, surrounded by those great inland waters, the Baltic, the Euxine, and the Mediterranean, and his conquest of the Russian Empire will

complete, through the medium of its great rivers, the mighty circumvallation. We are firmly of belief, that the dominion of the ocean will shortly become depreciated, and the necessity of large navies will be superseded. Ships of war will wander through the ocean, like wolves through the desert, and there will no longer be found prey to sustain them.

The defensive plan of Russia against the French invader seems to have been ill formed, and worse executed. They have made intrenchments of immense labour with little benefit, and formed large magazines merely to supply the enemy. Their armies have been discomfited and dispersed, while the French army, with its large divisions, moveable and not massy, have all the celerity necessary in marching, and all the momentum necessary in the field of battle. The whole country may be said to be a field of battle, in which different lines are drawn up ready for combined effort and mutual assistance. Most probably Alexander will sue for peace, and Napoleon will grant it upon hard conditions; one of which, no doubt, will be an adherence to the continental system. The present balance of power in Spain will induce Napoleon to grant peace to Russia, that he may be at liberty to pour his armies into the peninsula. The late successes of Lord Wellington have given that preponderance to the British arms, which will accelerate a treaty between Russia and France.

It is likely that Bonaparte speculated on the probability of a war with Russia, at least as soon as the British ministry. Had he moved his armies into Spain, it is to be supposed that Prussia, and Sweden would have acted on the offensive; instead of which, the garrisons of the for-

mer country were early filled with the French; and the government of the latter is obliged to content itself with merely a defensive declaration. Thus a new northern coalition has been defeated in its first formation, by the readiness of the French invader, who has, as it were, husbanded the war in the peninsula, until his contest with Russia be decided. The issue of that contest is the great hinge on which move the gates of the temple of Janus; and the war in Spain will be decided in the plains of Moscow; not by the victory at Salamanca, or the occupation of Madrid.

There speedily approaches a great crisis in the political condition of these countries. All men of all parties are, at last, becoming sensible of this. It does not require any deep insight into the signs of the times, nor is the eloquent verbosity of the *Edinburgh Review*, nor the volubility of the hundred-tongued Mr. Finlay, the advocate of the Catholics, at all necessary to show that a new era is really about to arrive in the commercial, financial, and political state of Great Britain. War has pushed forward the necessity of change, and we think that the American war, *most particularly*, will eventually be the instrument of accomplishing that reformation in all the branches of government without revolution, which is the first wish of every true lover of his country. Public men will soon be forced into the salvation of the Empire. Public opinion is, at present, making a rapid retrocession from positions not long ago maintained with inveterate obstinacy; and we believe that there is a most general anxiety for peace, even where there is a reluctance to express that desire. The land-holder and the merchant will shortly sympathise with the feelings and forebod-

ings of the stock-holder. The paper circulation will, indirectly, necessitate a salutary renovation of things, and accelerate that renovation. It is only by communicating with the market of the world in a common measure of value, that the just and *natural proportion* can be sustained between national capital, national stock, and the quantity of circulating medium which is necessary for the purposes of exchange in both, the undue accumulation of which fictitious medium only serves the ends of the enemy, in excluding us from the continent. Peace alone can bring back our gold, and the cultivation of good neighbourhood with the nations, instead of an insulated and monopolizing spirit pervading not only our foreign relations, but our domestic connexions. Reform alone can make these countries bear with fortitude the burthens which even peace will bring along with it. Reform alone can accomplish an incorporate union between these islands. Reform alone can make even Catholic emancipation a national blessing. We hail the urgent necessity of an adequate reform in the representation of the people; and in contemplating even our public calamities as indirect means in the hands of Divine Providence for accelerating the arrival of this best of blessings, we must

acknowledge that, in our eyes, they lose no small portion of their bitterness.

They who are interested in the redress of the wrongs of Africa, will find matter of much importance in the Remarks on the Sixth Report of the African Institution, at page 226.

IT affords satisfaction to us that "Doctor Black begs leave to inform the Ministers and Elders of the General Synod of Ulster, that on his return from an excursion during the greater part of July and August, he prepared, in pursuance of their request, and his engagement, a fair Copy of his "Statement relative to Dr. Dickson," delivered by him at their last Meeting; that it is now in the Press, and will be ready for delivery to the several Presbyteries, at their Quarterly Meeting in November."

When this Document shall be published, others besides the members of Presbyteries will read it, and it is to be hoped, judge impartially in the case. The subject is of high importance, and requires a dispassionate examination before the tribunal of public opinion; and before this tribunal the Synod of Ulster, instead of being judges in their own case, must submit to be parties. We shall do our duty in bringing the case forward for adjudication.

PUBLIC OCCURRENCES.

DISTRESS IN ENGLAND.

Such accounts as the following are seldom noticed in the Newspapers. The managers of them delight more to flatter; and they live by the deception. Those accounts are extracted from the Reports to the Association in London, for the relief of the manufacturing and labouring poor.

IT appears by a late investigation, that

in Spitalfields and its neighbourhood more than 10,000 weavers and their dependents, were out of employment. At Burslem in Staffordshire, in a population of 9000, near 1000 are upon the parish; at Bolton, in a population of 17,000, there are 3000 paupers; at Nottingham a large proportion of the poor are without any employment, and those with fa-